

Solution of Higher Education

Program in New Mexico

Fitz-Gerald

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Report to Governor of New Mexico
by Prof. John D. Fitz-Gerald
University of Illinois

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REPORT TO GOVERNOR of NEW MEXICO

by

Prof. John D. Fitz-Gerald
University of Illinois

To His Excellence, O. A. Larrazolo,
The Capitol,
Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Your Excellency:

Somewhat over a year ago, following the first of the two Educational Conferences that it has been my privilege to conduct in New Mexico in the summers of 1919 and 1920 (under the auspices of the American Association for International Conciliation), you asked me to study as an outsider the problem of the higher education of New Mexico. I have been working thereon as opportunity permitted ever since and in an interview that it was my privilege to have with you in July, 1920, I gave you a rough outline of the conclusions I had reached and you asked me to send them to you in detail. The purpose of this letter is to comply with that request.

By higher education I have understood, for the purposes of my study, those institutions entrance to which is based upon a high school preparation and whose courses are four years in length, leading to some recognized, academic degree, and in addition to those institutions all work beyond them which is usually connected with a graduate school of some kind. Obviously, therefore, what I have to say does not apply directly to your two normal schools: The New Mexico Normal University at East Las Vegas and the New Mexico State Normal School at Silver City, although each of them carries technical pedagogical work for two or more years beyond graduation from high school. Nor does it concern the New Mex-

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ico Military Institute, which likewise has a course carrying the student two years beyond graduation from high school.

INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED

The institutions I have in mind are all those separate faculties or institutions in your state which elsewhere are grouped within the corporate body of our great privately endowed universities or our great state universities, as, for example, the New Mexico State School of Mines at Socorro, the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts at State College, and the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque. And what I say of these would apply equally to any other faculties that might later be established, such as a faculty of law or a faculty of medicine or a college of journalism or dentistry or pharmacy, etc.

STATE NOT WELL SERVED, SAYS

It seems to me that under your present method of procedure with the School of Mines and the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts and the University, so called, all appealing to the legislature separately and independently for appropriations, the State is not being served to the best possible advantage. Each of these institutions, and quite naturally and very properly as things now stand, tries to get from the State all the funds it can for its own development, without any regard whatever for the needs of the sister institutions. Furthermore, your State University as at present constituted, seems to consist of only two faculties: The College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering, together with an embryonic graduate school. A university in the nature of the case should consist of more faculties than that, and the force of your State University is weakened by the absence from its jurisdiction of the other two schools that you have already established, namely, the School of Mines and the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts.

DUPLICATION WASTE

It would seem further, to an outsider, as though there must be a good deal of waste by duplication in the fact that your School

of Mines and your College of Mechanic Arts and your College of Engineering, all of whose fields are so closely akin, are actually located in three different cities.

My first set of recommendations then is as follows:

Have the legislature pass a bill merging all these institutions as separate faculties of the State University, with one single Board of Trustees, who should be elected by popular vote.

WOULD HAVE NINE TRUSTEES

It would be well to have these Trustees nine in number, elected for six years and divided into three classes. Every two years one of these classes would retire from office, but its members individually could be re-elected. In each class there should be one woman representative. In addition to these nine elected members, you would probably find it desirable to have the following officers serve ex-officio: The Governor of the State, the President of the State Board of Agriculture, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, all of whom should be elected to their positions by popular vote. The officers of the Board would be elected by the Board. This Board, and this Board only, should have the power of appointment for all members of the faculties, including the President and the Deans. The Board should not, however, have the power of nomination for faculty members. Such nominations should come from the other experts on the faculty, (usually, but not necessarily, through the Deans) to the President, who would present them to the Board of Trustees.

TO CO-ORDINATE NEEDS

The various departments in each of the colleges would prepare their respective budgets and present them to the Dean of their college. The Dean would proceed to co-ordinate to the best of his ability these various departmental needs. The several Deans would then present their budgets to the President, who again would proceed with an attempt at co-ordination of the varied needs of the several colleges. This co-ordinated budget the President then would

present to the Board of Trustees, who would approve it, or amend it with a view to further co-ordination. This final budget, thus co-ordinated, would be presented to the legislators for approval and passing.

In this unified budget it is evident that the element of waste by duplication, inevitable in the system you now have, would be reduced to a minimum.

WOULD MERGE ALL PHYSICAL PLANTS

The full advantages of this unification of administration would be obtained, however, only when you would have likewise merged the physical plants of all the schools concerned. Many of the results, however, can be obtained by the mere administrative unification and more will be obtained as the physical unification progresses.

Possibly for climatic and soil reasons the College of Agriculture might have to be left where it is, but I can see no reason why the other faculties, including that part of the College of Agriculture which is devoted to Mechanic Arts, should not be merged with the rest of the State University as speedily as the State can afford to make the physical transfer. And however expensive it may be at the present time to make that transfer, it should be borne in mind that it will always be more expensive to make it later on.

Intimately connected with this question of the physical unification of the University is that of the place that should be selected for the University's home. As an outsider, my judgment would be in favor of Santa Fe for the following reasons:

SANTA FE CULTURAL CENTER

Santa Fe seems to be the cultural center of the Southwest. It is a city permeated with memories of the past and has a cultural atmosphere that is comparable to some of the great cultural centers of Europe. While your state library is not very large, what there is of it is located in Santa Fe. Santa Fe is also the home of your two great historical museums which house the collections of the Historical Society of New Mexico, the

School of American Archaeology, and the New Mexico Museum of Archaeology.

Concerning the general desirableness of Santa Fe as a place to live in, you are even better informed than I. Its lying off the main line of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad should not be counted as a disadvantage. Princeton University is similarly located with relation to the main line of the Pennsylvania railroad. Let me point out, too, that the near proximity of the Pecos Forest Reserve would not be especially disadvantageous to a forestry school, if the University should ever develop such a school.

For all these reasons and several others that you can readily imagine, I should recommend the immediate transfer of the present State University (with the College of Arts and Sciences, its College of Engineering, and its embryonic graduate school) from Albuquerque to Santa Fe.

While I do not know the reasons that led to the University's being established at Albuquerque, I do know that during the summer I read an editorial news item in one of the Albuquerque papers in which it was stated that a number of the leading citizens of that city had come to the conclusion that if it were best for the state to have the State University located somewhere else, they were willing to have it so located.

OUTSIDER'S VIEWPOINT

As an outsider looking at the matter purely from the point of view of what will make the University most serviceable to the State, it seems to me that the reasons I have given for the immediate transfer of this part of the Ultimate State University to Santa Fe are entirely sound. As one who studied in some of the foremost universities of the world (Columbia, Leipzig, Berlin, Paris and Madrid) and who has visited many other universities equally famous (Yale, Princeton, Pennsylvania, John Hopkins, Trinity College, Dublin, Oxford, Leiden, Heidelberg, Jena, Bonn, Bordeaux, Zaragoza, Barcelona, Valencia, Sevilla, Salamanca, Buenos Aires, La Plata, Montevideo, Santiago de Chile, and San Marcos of Lima), I

know what it means for a student to be making his studies in a place that has an atmosphere of its own and that is permeated with memories of the past, while possessed of a spirit that is looking eagerly toward the future. All of this your students would have if your University were located at Santa Fe.

Under separate cover I am sending to you for your further information, a copy of the laws of the United States and the State of Illinois, concerning the University of Illinois. For the same reason I am sending you a copy of a Report of a Special Senate Committee authorized February 6, 1911. "To make a thoro investigation of * * * organization and efficiency of the University, with a view to drafting ultimately a constitution for the University of Illinois." This report has never been adopted, but the several faculties concerned took it up part by part and reported their several judgments on the various phases thereof that most intimately concerned them. I am enclosing a copy of those reports.

The copy of the Senate Committee Report that I am sending to you I have amended in all points where the Senate, in considering both sets of reports actually reached a decision. I trust you will find these reports helpful and suggestive in drafting your new State law and your new constitution for the new University of New Mexico, which shall combine under one administration all of your institutions of higher learning except the two normal schools and military institution.

If you are able to develop at this reorganized State University good strong courses in the liberal arts and sciences leading respectively to the degree of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences (according as the student shall have taken the majority of his work in the liberal arts or in the sciences), I should strongly recommend that in the further interests of avoiding waste by duplication your two normal schools be discouraged from carrying their work further than two years beyond high school graduation. At the same time those of their students who wish to go on for their bachelor's

degree in arts or in sciences should be encouraged to do so by having it understood that the University will accept their two years of Normal College work on a flat basis or one-half of all the work required for the respective bachelor's degree, upon the understanding, of course, that the University shall convince itself periodically that the Normal Colleges in those two years of work are maintaining proper collegiate standards. A concrete example will serve to show you what I mean in this last respect. While I know nothing of the actual standards of the New Mexico Normal School, I do know that the New Mexico Normal University is maintaining a two-year normal course of standard grade; and I know it for the reason that a year ago a graduate of the New Mexico Normal University was admitted to Junior standing in the University of California as a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

If for any reason there be undue delay in thus reorganizing your State University and in developing strong curricula therein leading to the respective degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences, as indicated above, then it would probably be advisable to encourage your two Normal Schools at East Las Vegas and at Silver City to develop such curricula for themselves. They already possess some of the machinery therefor.

If there is any other respect in which I can be of service to your Excellency I beg you to command me; and I wish to assure you that my two summers of teaching in your state and mingling with your people have given me a very real interest in your educational affairs.

With great respect, I have the honor, Sir, to be

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) JOHN D. FITZ-GERALD.

September 1, 1920.

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